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President: Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 161

Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration

Draft resolution (A/51/L.53)

The President: I call on the representative of Portugal to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.53.

Mr. Jeronimo (Portugal): In my capacity as representative of the presidency of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.53 under agenda item 161, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration".

There is no doubt that the issue of international migration is no doubt an important one and that it has played an important role in society by helping to forge economic, social and cultural bonds between peoples and States. The world today is faced with major migration issues. There are fundamental changes that have affected many countries in different regions. Whilst there is economic growth in some parts of the developing world, there is still a need for development in others. Internal conflicts that have arisen in some regions, the unemployment issue and the spread of environmental degradation that forces people to move on in search of a place where their survival is ensured, are only a few examples. There is a need to forge strategies that will address the current problems and their causes through an international commitment to seek practical and humane solutions.

I am certain that through the Cooperation Agreement that was signed on 25 June 1996, between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration, a stronger bond has been established which will respond to these challenges by helping States and individuals to solve migration problems through humanitarian migration and migration for development and introducing technical cooperation programmes, bringing about debate on research and information on these important issues.

The draft resolution, which we hope will be adopted by consensus is of a procedural nature. We look forward to continuing the debate on this item in the context of the report which is to be submitted to the Second Committee next year.

I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that the following Member States have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Canada, Chile, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United States.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): The history of the world is, to a large extent, the history of human migration.

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Starting from its original beginnings somewhere in East Africa, the human race has moved across vast distances and continents to reach the furthest outposts of geographic space. To that extent, each one of us is undeniably an immigrant in his own right. During this long march of human migration, continents were populated, and the best resources of the human intellect were used to maximize the returns from all the bounties that nature placed at the disposal of the human race. Migration has thus produced the essential inputs for the cross-ventilation of ideas and technologies, and for economic and intellectual development.

By and large, the motive force behind migration has been the desire of the individual to search for a better life in greater honour, security and decency. In recent times, however, international migration has been put to a serious test as a result of the growth of the nation-State and the protectionist barriers that it has germinated. Walls and moats have been built around our respective stockades with those who got in first spending most of their energy in preventing others from joining in the enjoyment of the fruits of nature and opportunity which they only hold in trust.

People do not leave their hearths and homes unless they have to or unless they are forced to. Islam recognizes the most fundamental and agonizing sacrifice which is inherent in migration from one's home. In fact, the Islamic calendar, called the Hijra or Migration, marks one of the most important migrations in history, from Mecca to Medina. It is because of the importance that we attach to the subject and to its proper management that we are disturbed not only at the inadequate attention being paid to addressing the root causes of migration, but also at the self-centred protectionism to which this fundamental human force is being subjected in today's world. We live in a global village, with destinies that are inter-linked, where problems and solutions transcend borders, and where differences of culture and tradition help us enrich each other through our contacts. We engage in commerce with each other, we learn from each other and in the process we all come out stronger.

Today, we have over 130 million migrants, a figure which subsumes all the categories: documented migrants, undocumented migrants, migrant workers and people seeking political asylum. While some efforts aimed at promoting respect for the rights of migrants have been made, discrimination against them is rampant in many countries: they are not only seen as second-class citizens, but are frequently exploited by the unscrupulous. Regulatory regimes in the receiving States are not geared towards giving full protection to migrants. In the recent past, we have witnessed a sad revival of racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance. The belief systems of the migrants are not being respected, and arbitrary dress codes are being prescribed for these migrant religious minorities.

The granting by the United Nations of observer status to the International Organization for Migration in 1992 was a step in the right direction. We must intensify cooperation and liaison between the secretariats of the two Organizations in order to ensure the effectiveness of the complementary actions being taken by them. In this regard, it is necessary to adopt a system-wide approach so that we can guarantee the observance of migrants' rights and maintain a focus on migration issues.

That is why Pakistan has committed its support to the International Organization for Migration in its efforts to focus attention on the critical importance of migration issues. We support the strategy and focus of those efforts, initially on trafficking connected with migration, including prevention and information sharing, and the development of solutions for victims. We endorse the work of IOM to assist in the voluntary return of migrants.

The draft resolution before the General Assembly, contained in document A/51/L.53, falls short of our expectations, but we have decided to accept it in its present form so that the process of cooperation between the IOM and the United Nations can continue to receive the support of Member States. A large number of developing countries, particularly the sending States, would have preferred a much stronger text encompassing the whole range of substantive issues relating to migration.

Finally, we must step up efforts for the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development, as called for and agreed upon earlier, so that we can adequately address the problems of global migration in a comprehensive and responsible manner.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): One of the objectives of the United Nations is to achieve international cooperation in addressing international issues of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian

character. In its efforts to achieve this, all Members of the United Nations have not only worked with one another, but have also established strong and effective partnerships with other regional, subregional and international organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental. One of those partners is the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The mandate of IOM is certainly supportive of the principles and objectives of the United Nations.

Through its activities in the field of migration, IOM makes an important contribution to the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person, without distinctions of any kind, such as race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It acts with its partners in the international community to meet the challenges of migration, to advance understanding of migration issues, to encourage social and economic development through migration, and to achieve respect for the dignity and well-being of migrants.

Migration is a universal phenomenon. Reports of the United Nations have reaffirmed that international migration is widely recognized as an intrinsic part of the development process. It is not even a new phenomenon. Many of the countries in the world today grew and prospered from migratory movements, whether as sending or receiving States. Roles have shifted along the way, so that the sending country of yesterday may be the receiving country of today, but the benefits remain.

The many facets of migration are covered by the four broad categories of IOM's programme activities: humanitarian migration; migration for development; technical cooperation; and migration debate, research and information. The various activities that are being carried out by the IOM under each programme support and complement those of the United Nations in the same or related areas.

The Philippines believes that there is a need for strong and continuous cooperation and collaboration between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration, and we are pleased to be one of the sponsors of the draft resolution before the Assembly this afternoon.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/4 of 16 October 1992, I now call on the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration, Mr. James N. Purcell, Jr.

Mr. Purcell (International Organization for Migration): Under your dynamic leadership, Mr. President, it gives me special pleasure to address this session of the General Assembly under the agenda item on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration". I view consideration of this item as a significant additional step in the positive evolution of working relationships between the two institutions, especially over the past five years.

To assist Governments and individuals in meeting the operational challenges of migration was the reason for the founding of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) 45 years ago. What appeared at that time as an issue involving a limited number of sending and receiving countries has today turned into a global issue of major proportions: international migration.

As in 1951, operational programmes, such as resettlement assistance, still remain at the core of IOM activities. But it is in the recurring involvement in humanitarian emergencies, with consequent large movements of people, where our cooperation with the United Nations has developed most closely in recent years. Here the coordinating role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs provides us with leadership and an opportunity to contribute IOM's expertise to complex emergencies. At this time, IOM and United Nations staff are working side by side in many countries and regions around the world, such as Afghanistan, Angola and the Great Lakes region. Occasionally, we also undertake humanitarian operations on our own, as was the case in 1995 when the United Nations had not yet taken the decision to operate inside Chechnya, and when, following consultations with the Russian authorities, IOM commenced evacuating vulnerable civilians.

In post-crisis situations, return and reintegration of displaced civilian populations, demobilized soldiers and their families has become one of the areas where IOM contributes to rehabilitation and development in countries such as Haiti, Mozambique and Angola.

Increasingly, programmes for the return of qualified nationals to developing countries are also being applied to strengthen the indigenous human-resource base of societies emerging from crisis.

As different as all these programmes seem, what they have in common is the reaffirmation of IOM's essential role and commitment in providing services in a variety of migration circumstances, from emergencies to planned and orderly migration schemes.

For example, based on the consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in 1994, IOM has developed specific responses to many of the migration situations that were identified in chapter X of the Programme of Action of the Conference. Underlying these responses are three basic premises: first, that orderly and planned migration can be a positive force for social and economic development; secondly, that the long-term manageability of international migration hinges on making the option to remain in one's country a viable one for all peoples; and thirdly, that isolated action, whether by an individual State or by a group, cannot effectively address what is today a global phenomenon in an interdependent world.

The International Conference on Population and Development was a major milestone in the migration field in that it acknowledged both the constructive and the more highly publicized destabilizing aspects of migration. It also gave explicit recognition to the desirability of working towards comprehensive approaches to international migration in a cooperative framework. Furthermore, we can be gratified that action, even though limited, is beginning to be taken to achieve this goal through concerted efforts.

In our planning and action, we must always keep central the human aspect of migration. Personal contact with migrants and awareness of the lives they lead is IOM's daily experience. This commitment has its moral imperatives too, which extend to calling attention to the treatment migrants as a group are accorded. In the face of xenophobic trends to which we are all witness, IOM cannot remain silent. We therefore continue to work with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners to promote understanding of migrants as human beings, and to combat the simplistic equation of migrants with crime, delinquency, unemployment, sickness and disease — in short, to counter the use of migrants as the scapegoats for society's ills.

For an intergovernmental organization such as IOM, which works in a field with clear links to the issues dealt with by a number of United Nations organizations and bodies, timely, systematic interchanges and close working relationships with our partners promote the sorts of innovative, practical, cost effective initiatives required to address contemporary migration issues. We are gratified that, since IOM obtained observer status to the General Assembly in 1992, the possibilities to establish the formal basis for such cooperation have greatly expanded.

Cooperation between the United Nations and IOM, which the Assembly is addressing today, benefits from the Cooperation Agreement signed in June of this year by the Secretary-General and myself. It will further benefit from operational accords we have concluded this week with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as from those which we are also negotiating with other parts of the United Nations system. All of these formal actions are designed to broaden and regularize our day-to-day cooperation with the United Nations system, most especially on the ground, at the field level.

The positive evolution in IOM-United Nations cooperation has also facilitated such new forms of concerted international action as forming the joint secretariat for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Conference on Refugees and Migrants, which was held in Geneva this past May. The IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) worked together for over two years prior to the Conference to forge a pragmatic approach to a potentially complex migration and refugee situation. It is significant that one of the outcomes of the Conference was a joint IOM and UNHCR operational strategy to implement the CIS Conference Programme of Action. This joint strategy was noted and praised by the 37 countries that took part in the Conference. Undoubtedly, this sets a good precedent for the future.

Other examples of our work with the United Nations system are our participation in the working group on international migration, and our role in preparations for the upcoming session of the Commission on Population and Development, with special emphasis on the linkages between migration and development as its theme.

For migration issues, the international community will need in the future to address various categories of persons across the migration spectrum — from refugees to permanent immigrants, with all the gradations along

the way. Effective multilateral cooperation should aim for enhanced teamwork among involved organizations, highlighted by handing off the baton unselfishly, at the right moment, to the team members most directly involved in the next stage of the process, in a spirit of complementarity and reciprocity. This difficult but essential goal is being advanced by the Assembly's actions here today.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.53.

I should like to announce, that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Japan and the Netherlands.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.53?

Draft resolution A/51/L.53 was adopted (resolution 51/148).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 161?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 34 (*continued*)

Assistance in mine clearance

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/540)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.44)

The President: I call on the representative of Ireland to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.44.

Mr. Murphy (Ireland): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.44, entitled "Assistance in mine clearance", on behalf of the 58 sponsors listed in the draft resolution. Angola, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Guatemala, Kazakstan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

I wish on behalf of the European Union to thank all delegations that have given their support to this draft resolution and contributed constructively to its preparation. We have already had an opportunity to outline our overall approach in some detail during the debate on this item two weeks ago. Allow me, therefore, on this occasion to outline briefly the main elements of the draft resolution before us.

The introductory paragraphs reaffirm the General Assembly's deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian problem caused by the ever-increasing presence of landmines and their effects on victims, particularly children.

The fifth preambular paragraph notes the decisions taken at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, particularly with respect to the inclusion in the Amended Protocol of a number of provisions of importance for mine-clearance operations, notably the requirement of detectability.

The sixth preambular paragraph notes the adoption of the Ottawa Declaration at the Ottawa Conference: "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-personnel Mines" and notes the offer by the Government of Belgium to host a follow-on conference next year.

The offer by the Government of Japan to host a conference next March, with a view to reinforcing international support for the work of the United Nations in landmine clearance, is welcomed in the seventh preambular paragraph.

The eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs underline the importance of recording the location of mines, in accordance with international law, so that the records can be used in the post-conflict period to remove mines safely and economically. They also underline the important role and responsibilities of the international community, particularly of the States involved in the deployment of landmines, in this area.

The twelfth and thirteenth preambular paragraphs express concern about the limited availability of safe and cost-effective mine-detection and mine-clearance equipment, and the lack of global coordination in the development of mine-clearance technology. They further express encouragement at the results of the conference organized by the Government of Denmark, notably in relation to international standards for humanitarian mine clearance.

The role of the United Nations in mine-clearance activities, and that of donor and recipient Governments, of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and of non-governmental organizations in coordination efforts, are commended, as is the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

The operative part of the draft resolution expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/51/540) and to all those that have contributed to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance, and invites further contributions to the Fund. It underlines the importance of developing national mine-clearance capacities, of promoting awareness of landmines, especially among children, and of international assistance for the rehabilitation of landmine victims. The role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a focal point in the United Nations for coordinating humanitarian demining and related issues is again welcomed, particularly as regards the establishment of comprehensive mine-action programmes.

Member States are once again called upon to provide information and technical and material assistance to mine-afflicted countries. The provision of technological assistance and the promotion of scientific research and development on humanitarian mine-clearance techniques are also contemplated. In addition, Member States are encouraged to continue to support ongoing activities to promote appropriate technology, as well as international operational and safety standards for humanitarian mine-clearance activities, including through the early follow-up of the International Conference on Mine Clearance Technology.

Finally, allow me to express the hope of all the sponsors that this draft resolution will attract broad support and will be adopted by consensus.

The President: I call on the representative of Ukraine on a point of order.

Mr. Reshetnyak (Ukraine): Ukraine too wishes to join in sponsoring draft resolution A/51/L.44.

The President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.44.

May I take it the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.44?

Draft resolution A/51/L.44 was adopted (resolution 51/149).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted.

Mrs. Wang Xiaolin (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has just joined the consensus on draft resolution A/51/L.44 on assistance in mine clearance. China is in favour of the humanitarian efforts made by the international community to avoid the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians. In countries that are faced with the task of post-conflict reconstruction, mines indeed pose a threat to the civilian population. We appreciate and support efforts made by the United Nations to improve the mine clearance capacity of these countries and to augment public awareness of mines.

China has provided assistance, within its capacity, to countries involved in mine clearance, and will continue to do so. Meanwhile we believe that in order to solve the question of mines, a balance must be struck between humanitarian concerns and the legitimate military need of sovereign States for self-defence. Mines constitute a legitimate military means of self-defence for countries with long land borders, and especially for developing countries that do not have sophisticated defensive weaponry or advanced military technology. In order to find an effective military alternative, and before such an alternative can be implemented, we must be certain that the right to national security is not breached when it comes to arms control measures aimed at prohibiting the abuse of mines.

The amended Protocol on mines in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons contains provisions restricting the use of mines. Our main priority now is to achieve universal accession and compliance. Meanwhile, my delegation supports efforts to strengthen international cooperation in mine clearance under the coordination of the United Nations, so that people can begin reconstruction as soon as possible in war-torn regions and live happy lives under normal conditions.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba fully shares the humanitarian concerns regarding the irresponsible and random use of mines and explosive devices throughout

the world and is aware of its economic and social consequences. We generally agree with the contents of the resolution just adopted on assistance in mine clearance.

It is for this reason that our country took an active part in the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We welcome the outcome, including the adoption of an amended Protocol II on mines, booby traps and other devices, and we also feel that the efforts to promote mine clearance constitute an undeniably important step forward. My country ratified that Convention in 1987 and we believe achieving universality should now be a priority. This would help achieve the purposes of resolution 51/149.

The resolution underscores the need to mobilize the resources needed for the expensive exercise of mine clearance. In this respect, we stress the need to foster technical cooperation in this field on the broadest possible basis, both to develop economical, safe techniques for mine detection and removal and to provide access to such techniques by those requiring them, with a view to developing international cooperation to mitigate the suffering of those who have fallen victim to the random and indiscriminate use of such mines, and who must be rehabilitated and fully reintegrated into society. I would like to reaffirm that my delegation is ready to help with its expertise in the effort to implement international programmes for the treatment and rehabilitation of mine victims.

Elsewhere in the draft resolution, reference is made to the Conference held in Ottawa, Canada on the theme "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines". Participants undertook a commitment towards the earliest possible conclusion of a legally-binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. My delegation would like once again to reaffirm its profound wish to support any international initiatives that could genuinely help to find more effective solutions to the humanitarian problems stemming from the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of mines which at the same time protect the legitimate national security interests of States making use of such weapons for strictly defensive purposes and in compliance with all international provisions that apply to such weapons.

Lastly, we would like to place on record that we joined in the consensus on this resolution on the understanding that any negotiating exercise that may take place in the immediate future must ensure that a requisite and necessary balance be struck between humanitarian concerns and the legitimate security interests of the States concerned.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 34?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 21 (continued) and 39

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(c) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/704)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.49)

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/698)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.49)

The President: I call on the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.49.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): Germany is pleased to introduce a draft resolution (A/51/L.49) in two parts, entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan" and "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security". The draft resolution is sponsored by the following Member States: Afghanistan, Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland,

Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan and Germany. Since the draft resolution will not be adopted today, we invite all other Member States to join this impressive group of sponsors.

Germany feels honoured that, as at the forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions of the General Assembly, we were able to participate in the preparation of this draft resolution by a group of interested countries. We also thank our partners in the European Union and other delegations, such as the delegation of India, for their very constructive interest in our work. Germany also fully supports what will be said by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Baumanis (Lativia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My country has enjoyed a long history of friendly and close relations with the people of Afghanistan. We are therefore deeply concerned about the ongoing military confrontation and saddened by the very heavy burden it places on the civilian population. We are also concerned by the ongoing discrimination against women and girls as well as other violations of human rights. The seemingly endless war in Afghanistan and the increased fighting the country has seen over the last few months underline yet again that a solution to this conflict must be found at the negotiating table and not on the battlefield.

Germany strongly believes that the United Nations must play the central role in all international efforts aiming at the promotion of peace and stability in Afghanistan. We call upon all States, and in particular States of the region and other interested States, to put their full weight behind the impartial approach of the United Nations in Afghanistan and to fully support the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan. We would encourage the Head of the Special Mission to continue and expand his consultations with States of the region and other interested States.

Over the last year, the United Nations has reacted in many ways to the ongoing and deepening crisis in Afghanistan. Various United Nations agencies have continued to carry out humanitarian programmes. The Secretary-General strengthened the Special Mission by assigning to it four additional political affairs officers. In July, he appointed my former colleague, Dr. Norbert Holl, as the new Head of the Special Mission. On 18 November, the Secretary-General convened a meeting of interested States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference on the situation in Afghanistan, and afterwards he expressed the intention to call further meetings of that group from time to time. The Security Council agreed on two presidential statements on the situation in Afghanistan, those of 15 February and 28 September 1996. It adopted resolution 1076 (1996) by consensus on 22 October.

The draft resolution I am introducing today reflects all the past year's United Nations activities and decisions regarding Afghanistan, and at the same time, it provides guidance for the months to come. I will not read out the entire draft resolution, but hope that members will read the text for themselves.

It has been said time and time again that the main responsibility for finding a peaceful solution to this conflict lies with the Afghan parties. What the United Nations can and should do is help the Afghan parties agree on and implement a peaceful settlement, and help the civilian population that has suffered terribly under what is now 17 years of war. The draft resolution Germany is introducing today can serve as a framework for such an approach. It provides guidelines for the international community and for the Afghan parties. It contains a set of principles for a peaceful settlement. And it offers an instrument, the United Nations Special Mission, to facilitate the negotiation and implementation of such a settlement by the Afghan parties.

We hope that this draft resolution will receive strong support. In giving it such support, the General Assembly would send a strong message to Afghanistan — a message that the country and its people will not be forgotten and that the international community will not give up its effort to convince the leaders of the Afghan parties to renounce the deadly logic of war and to embark on the road to peace.

Mr. Gorelik (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Events in recent months have reinforced our belief in the need for the urgent adoption of coordinated action to re-launch the peace process in Afghanistan. The intra-Afghan conflict has taken on new features which are connected first and foremost with its escalation into an inter-ethnic conflict. It is clear that the development of the conflict in that

direction threatens the division of Afghanistan and threatens to destabilize the region.

Hostilities in Afghanistan are taking on ever more violent forms, accompanied by flagrant violations of human rights — first and foremost, the right to life. The world was astounded by the medieval regulations recently laid down in Afghanistan. The killing of former Afghan President Najibullah is a clear example of this. Human rights are most frequently violated in those areas controlled by the Taliban. Women, in particular, are suffering, being deprived of rights they are granted the world over. Many widows cannot work to support their families. Girls are being deprived of the right to education. The forced mobilization of youth into military regiments has caused the flight of thousands of people.

We sternly condemn hostile activities and other violations by the Taliban of the status and immunity of United Nations staff and of the staff of other organizations working in Afghanistan. These violations now include incursions into United Nations facilities and the detention of international officials. A recent flagrant example of this was the Taliban's forcing down a United Nations flight which contained a delegation of the Tajik opposition which was on its way to a meeting organized by the United Nations as part of the inter-Tajik negotiation process. We demand an immediate end to such actions. The continuance of hostile activities against international organizations involved primarily in humanitarian tasks in Afghanistan will inevitably lead to a reduction in the humanitarian programmes so sorely needed by the Afghan people.

The expansion of Taliban control into new areas of the country has led to an increase in drug trafficking. Afghanistan has now become a major producer of narcotic drugs, the flow of which goes through Central Asia and Russia, Eastern Europe and finally Western Europe. There is evidence that dangerous international terrorists are finding safe haven in Afghanistan.

The escalation of the conflict is compounded by outside interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Those who are trying to solve the Afghan problem by military force, by establishing themselves as the dominating force and by extending their control across the entire country depend on outside support, not only arms deliveries and funding but also the sending of foreign soldiers to take part in hostilities. This approach cannot succeed. In Afghanistan, a country made up of many nationalities, no one ethnic group can be the dominant force. The conflict can only be settled by respect for the interests of all ethnic groups, regions, religions and military and political groups.

The world community must send a clear signal to the warring parties immediately to halt all hostilities, refrain from the use of force, set aside their differences and engage in political dialogue aimed at national reconciliation, a lasting political settlement to the conflict and the establishment of a completely representative and broad-based transitional Government of national unity.

The majority of interested States in the region are taking a responsible and objective approach to developments in Afghanistan. Immediately after the situation in Afghanistan took a dramatic turn for the worse, the five countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States — Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan — appealed for assistance in finding a speedy political settlement in Afghanistan. We also welcome the decisions adopted at the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers to encourage the Afghan parties to work towards peace. An important event in this regard was the Tehran regional conference.

All these forums supplement the efforts undertaken by the United Nations. On the initiative of the Almaty "group of five", the Security Council adopted the significant resolution 1076 (1996) and continues carefully to follow developments in the situation in Afghanistan. An unprecedented event was the convening in New York on 18 November, on the initiative of the Secretary-General, of a meeting of interested Member States on Afghanistan, when they reaffirmed their support for the principles set forth in the resolution on Afghanistan submitted to the General Assembly last year: respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and an end to interference in its internal affairs. Like many other countries, Russia feels that such meetings are extremely useful.

The Russian Federation is deeply convinced that the key role in encouraging the Afghan parties to engage in dialogue should, as in the past, be played by the United Nations. We express our full support for the efforts of the Organization, in particular for the activities of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, headed by Mr. Norbert Heinrich Holl, in helping direct the political process towards the goals of

national reconciliation and a lasting political settlement with the participation of all parties to the conflict and all strata of Afghan society.

We highly value United Nations activities to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and the work of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan to ensure that the United Nations system has a coordinated approach to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. We hope that the January Ashgabat meeting on humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan will be a success.

I would like to express the hope that the financing of humanitarian programmes for all regions in the country will be balanced, as provided for in the inter-agency consolidated appeal for 1997 for Afghanistan. For its part, Russia has provided and will continue to provide as much humanitarian assistance as it can to the Afghan population.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that in our view, all the links in the United Nations system, namely the General Assembly, the Security Council and humanitarian institutions, can and must make complementary contributions to the earliest possible settlement of the Afghan conflict and ensure that we relieve the suffering of the Afghan people. This is why the delegation of Russia took an active part in the preparation of and became a sponsor of the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly, which has just been introduced by the representative of Germany. We believe that the draft resolution will give clear guidelines for achieving the comprehensive peace settlement which must be agreed upon by the Afghan parties.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since the time when General Assembly resolution 50/88 was adopted, the situation in Afghanistan has been deteriorating. The people of that country, once under foreign occupation, are still suffering from the consequences of a vicious cycle of war and violence. The continuation of war in Afghanistan has not only caused the destruction of the country's infrastructure and adversely affected the plight of its people, but has also created a source of instability and concern in the region and a threat to international peace and security. The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, as explained in the report of the Secretary-General,

> "remains serious and is likely to deteriorate sharply over the winter months." (*A/51/698, para. 23*)

While over two million Afghan refugees still outside the country have not had the opportunity to return to their homes, the recent fighting in Afghanistan has caused tens of thousands of new refugees or displaced persons. The international community is thus obliged to render its assistance to the people of Afghanistan, inside and outside the country, in the hope that those who survived the scourge of war can survive hunger and disease. In addition, the shortage of food, fuel and other humanitarian necessities in most parts of Afghanistan may cause yet another disaster in this war-torn country, victimizing the most vulnerable segments of the Afghan population.

Furthermore, the destructive side-effects of the civil strife in Afghanistan have spilled over its national borders and constitute serious sources of insecurity and instability in the region and beyond. In this connection, reference should be made, *inter alia*, to the illegal movement of criminals and the illicit traffic in arms and narcotics, such are rampant in the region. The continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan has indeed provided fertile ground for increasing these illegal activities; unfortunately, some warring factions rely on drug trafficking as a source of their income.

While the fratricidal war in Afghanistan continues, not all the warring factions have shown their good intention and will in searching for a way to achieve a durable peace in the country; in the Secretary-General's words,

> "certain Afghan parties seem to continue to favour the military option." (*A/51/698, para. 56*)

Despite the repeated calls of the international community and countries in the region upon Afghan leaders to denounce the fighting and engage in political dialogue, war continues. We believe, as we have indicated in the past, that the crisis in Afghanistan can have no military solution. By now, the Afghan leaders should have come to the conclusion that bombs, bullets and tanks are the worst means of communicating with each other. Moreover, nothing justifies the violence and bloodshed in Afghanistan, and no faction or State can endorse the ongoing violence in the name of Islam. It is totally unacceptable that in Afghanistan some

policies and practices that are clearly un-Islamic, and even anti-Islamic, in form or in nature are conducted and attributed to Islam.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, in addition to rendering humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and hosting millions of refugees during the last 18 years, has spared no effort in attempting to bring this unfortunate crisis to an end. The very unpleasant fact is that the vulnerability of various segments of the Afghan people is so great. Specifically, a large proportion of the population has serious difficulty in meeting even basic needs. Being well aware of the suffering of the Afghan people, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken various measures to alleviate the suffering of the people in Afghanistan. It has built hospitals and medical centres to treat patients free of charge; offered educational programmes for Afghan students; trained Afghan medical groups; implemented a comprehensive and continuous plan of child vaccination; given necessary materials to orphanages; and provided food and non-food assistance, often on a daily basis. These are but some of the measures we have taken to help Afghan people.

Furthermore, as a neighbouring country, the Islamic Republic of Iran is deeply concerned about the causes and consequences of instability and insecurity in the region. We cannot remain indifferent towards developments that might affect our national interests. We will continue to work with the States concerned, the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to encourage the Afghan leaders to set aside their guns, narrow their differences and start a genuine process of inter-Afghan dialogue. It is common knowledge that Iran has made extensive efforts to promote political dialogue among the various factions in an attempt to get them to abandon the use of force, and that Iran has promoted national reconciliation and the establishment of a broad-based Government in Afghanistan.

Consequent to our efforts, a regional conference on Afghanistan was convened in Tehran in October 1996 and was attended by the countries most directly affected by the instability and insecurity resulting from the fighting in Afghanistan. We believe, and it was also indicated in the discussions and the final declaration of the conference, that the Tehran conference provided a unique opportunity for participants to express their collective support for the ongoing peacemaking efforts of the United Nations and to send a strong signal to the warring factions in Afghanistan that the countries in the region totally reject the vicious circle of war and violence in Afghanistan. The Tehran conference was also a manifestation of cooperation and coordination among Afghanistan's neighbours and other concerned States in the region. We are of the view that such cooperation is indispensable to the success of international efforts to put an end to bloodshed and violence in Afghanistan.

At the same time, the international community must do more to save the people of Afghanistan from this bloodshed and the country from disintegration. A fundamental principle of these efforts must be that Afghanistan should remain a united and sovereign State. Thus, the task of the international community as a whole, and of the regional countries in particular, is to stand firm against any idea that might undermine the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan.

The initiative of the Secretary-General to convene an international meeting on Afghanistan on 18 November of this year was positive and encouraging. The meeting was important in terms of the emphasis which regional and other interested States placed on the basic elements necessary for a peaceful settlement of the Afghan crisis. We believe that those elements include: respect for the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan; the rejection of foreign interference, especially through the supply of arms; respect for human rights; the necessity of a cessation of hostilities, the demilitarization of Kabul; and national reconciliation.

Furthermore, the view expressed that such meetings must continue to be held from time to time and at various levels is also encouraging. We welcome the observation of the Secretary-General in his report that

> "the international community seems prepared to re-focus its attention on the situation in Afghanistan". *(A/51/698, para. 52)*

We have continuously supported the active engagement of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan. We believe that the Special Mission should continue its efforts with even greater strength and impartiality to find a political solution through establishing and maintaining contact with all groups in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): Japan is deeply concerned about the prolongation and the ever-growing complexity of the conflict in Afghanistan. The conflict is denying the people of that country their right to live in peace and pursue their livelihoods freely and with a sense of hope for their future. Moreover, the fighting in Afghanistan poses a threat to the political stability and economic development of the surrounding countries. It also makes the solution of such global problems as drug trafficking and international terrorism more difficult. For all these reasons, the peaceful solution of the conflict and the development of Afghanistan as a stable, sovereign country are of profound importance to each and every Member State represented here today.

The conflict, of course, can only be resolved by the Afghan people themselves. Japan is particularly concerned about the havoc and destruction that is wreaked by the anti-personnel landmines that continue to be laid in Afghanistan. Landmines have claimed countless innocent victims and are causing unspeakable human suffering. But in addition to the humanitarian problem, landmines pose a tremendous obstacle to Afghanistan's post-conflict rehabilitation and development. Japan urges the warring factions to recognize this fact and refrain from using these odious weapons. It calls upon them to cease all armed hostilities immediately, renounce the use of force, and engage without delay in a political dialogue aimed at national reconciliation and the establishment of a Government based on the broad support of the people of Afghanistan.

In insisting that the conflict must be resolved by the Afghan people themselves, it is certainly not my intention to downplay the crucial role that the international community has to play in the effort to reach a peace settlement. It is imperative that Member States support the United Nations in its efforts as an impartial mediator to create an environment in which the Afghan factions will be encouraged to engage in dialogue. The mediation activities of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, under the leadership of Mr. Norbert Holl, are particularly important in this regard. Moreover, it is incumbent upon the international community to prevent outside interference in the form of military and financial assistance provided by third countries. Indeed, countries that have influence with one or another of the warring factions in Afghanistan should use that influence in a constructive manner. They can do this by refraining from any action that can undermine efforts to achieve a peaceful solution and by supporting, steadfastly and in good faith, the mediation and reconciliation efforts of the United Nations.

As Japan has emphasized on previous occasions, it fully supports those efforts, and has dispatched a political affairs officer to participate in the activities of the Special Mission. Moreover, in the conviction that it is up to the Afghan people themselves to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, Japan is willing to provide a venue for a meeting among the factions if they consider that such a meeting would help them in their search for a peace settlement. My country has also expressed its intention to contribute to peace implementation efforts within an international framework for the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan once such a framework is established.

As a sponsor of draft resolution A/51/L.49, Japan sincerely hopes that each of the Afghan factions, as well as every Member State, will fully respect its provisions so that a peaceful solution to the Afghan problem will be found as soon as possible.

Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan): On December 19 1995, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/88 regarding the situation in Afghanistan. The resolution reiterated support for the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and emphasized the essential role of the United Nations in bringing peace to the country. Unfortunately, a year has passed and the Afghan nation has yet to see peace and complete stability restored in its homeland. Instead, the sufferings of the people have been further exacerbated. For two months, the civilian population, and in particular the citizens of Kabul, the capital, have been subjected to systematically cruel treatment and to atrocities. These atrocities are in addition to the uncounted thousands of those who have been killed, or who have been made orphans or widows, or who have been disabled. Kabul has been further devastated; more cultural artifacts have been looted.

The Taliban mercenaries, with direct outside help, invaded Kabul on 27 September 1996. In keeping with their draconian social order, they closed schools, technical and teacher training institutions and universities to girls and women. Women were forbidden not merely to learn and study, but also to work. Since 70 per cent of all teachers in elementary schools were women, boys' primary schools were also closed. Some 25,000 widows, together with their children — estimated to be 50,000 — were stripped of

their livelihood. According to a report by Reuters on 6 December 1996, very recently about 225 women were physically punished for not wearing the type of dress that the Taliban are trying to impose on innocent Afghan women. Serbian-type "ethnic cleansing" has been practised by the Taliban. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as a result of these repressive measures, which followed the Taliban's occupation of Kabul, up to 50,000 citizens of Kabul have been made refugees or internally displaced.

Government offices, banks and productive institutions have been closed down. The so-called Taliban administration, despite the amount of food and financial resources provided by their sponsors for the continuity of their activities, do not have the ability to finance even a part of the shattered administration still present in the capital. In sum, general poverty and destitution have befallen the inhabitants of Kabul. With regard to that situation, on 9 December 1996 *The Times* of London reported that families have forced their children to resort to the most shocking and tragic tasks in order to survive. For the past two weeks, children have dug up graves and sold human bones for the price of 50 cents per 6 kilograms, to be sold in bulk along with animal bones to Pakistani merchants. These bones are then transformed into powder and fed to chickens and other animals on the other side of the border.

These are Afghan bones. This is happening at a time when in other parts of the world billions of dollars are spent on special food so that people can stay healthy and in shape. This is the best example of the gap that exists between the haves and the have-nots. This is the desperate situation of the Afghan nation. And the saddest irony of all is the way this nation has been treated for sacrificing one and a half million lives in the name of freedom, democracy and human rights.

This is not only the official voice of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. This is the cry of our nation, which I want to echo to representatives, and through them to their Governments and peoples. I want to voice the cry of my nation without regard to the political orientation of the individuals who are suffering. Whether supporters or opponents of the State, they are still part of our nation. Their cry is my cry. It is the cry of a nation afflicted by destitution, poverty and sickness, yet victimized by flames of division kindled from outside for political and strategic objectives. It is because of this that the national unity and territorial integrity of my country have been placed in grave danger.

In last year's resolution, adopted by consensus, the General Assembly called on all Afghan parties to support the United Nations Special Mission in its peacemaking efforts. Member States were asked once again to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and to respect the independence, national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country. Allow me to indicate whether positive and sincere steps have been taken in the implementation of that resolution.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan, even before the establishment of the United Nations Special Mission, stressed the principle that a solution should be based upon a genuine inter-Afghan dialogue. Meanwhile, we have always emphasized the central role of the United Nations in resolving the problem. We have therefore indicated our readiness to cooperate with the United Nations Special Mission towards the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Afghanistan.

By undertaking new endeavours in the inter-Afghan dialogue, the Islamic State of Afghanistan was able to persuade former opponents, as a first step to a comprehensive peace plan, to join the Government, thereby further broadening its base. President Burhanuddin Rabbani even expressed his readiness to travel to the opposition headquarters for talks on the creation of a mechanism to which power should be transferred, the establishment of a transitional Government, and free and fair elections under the supervision of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to be agreed by all sides. We took these steps in goodwill and in complete understanding of the United Nations resolutions and decisions which requested all parties to the conflict to settle their differences through peaceful means. Unfortunately, owing to the Taliban's intransigent and rejectionist attitude and their reliance on an exclusively military option, the conflict is yet to cease.

With regard to foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, it is with deep sorrow that I have to say that, despite the pretence of support for non-intervention in Afghanistan in accordance with resolution 50/88, the level of intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan has only risen. As the end of a millennium draws closer, we have entered the information age. The sort of foreign military adventurism and intimidation, prompted by outside commercial and industrial interests, which once took

years to be fully revealed, nowadays can be easily exposed. It has become evident to the family of nations that the Afghan nation has once again fallen victim to a classic form of neo-colonial expansionism because of the economic and strategic interests of foreign Powers. To serve these interests, foreign establishments have been training, financing and equipping the Taliban mercenaries and have facilitated their subsequent deployment on Afghan soil.

In October this year, we forwarded to the Security Council irrefutable evidence of foreign interference in our country. For the purpose of our argument, a reference will suffice to document A/51/654 of 4 November 1996. It is a first-hand account of the observations of a well-known western journalist regarding the presence and involvement of armed foreign fighters in the Afghan conflict. Document A/51/527 of 18 October 1996 lists the names of some armed foreigners captured on our soil who are currently under the custody of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. We once again call upon the head of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan to meet these foreign detainees, these unwanted foreign guests, and, as called for by the Security Council, to report to it for appropriate consideration and action.

To those who have inherited the colonialist designs aimed at conquering Afghanistan or at installing in Kabul a regime subservient to them, we suggest that drawing lessons from Afghan history of the last two centuries would save them much grief and trouble.

First, the people of Afghanistan will not accept foreign rule, regardless of its origins or pretexts.

Secondly, Afghanistan has preserved its geopolitical role. That is why political observers and analysts call it a buffer State. Expansionist policies against Afghanistan, coming from any side, have inevitably created bitter backlashes and consequences for the expansionists themselves. The need to establish a balance of power has never allowed any single foreign Power to achieve hegemony for a long period of time. The rules governing such foreign adventures in Afghanistan have always been and shall be those of a zero-sum game.

We strongly believe that continued political and military meddling in Afghanistan will result in protracted instability throughout the region. If not extinguished, the flames of the war imposed on us will one day engulf those who were instrumental in lighting them.

Those promoting ill-intentioned and confused policies with regard to Afghanistan will eventually realize that the continuation of a wait-and-see attitude and reliance on imaginary prophecies will lead to the institutionalization of drug production, processing and trade, along with terrorism, in Afghanistan. Such a course of events would be seriously harmful to the long-term interests of peace, democracy and stability in the entire region.

Tolerance of the rejectionist attitude of the Taliban by the international community certainly emboldened the Taliban camp to insist on an exclusively miliary option and to not agree to any peace process that would lead Afghanistan towards national unity, peace and democracy.

Afghanistan, throughout its membership at the United Nations since 1946, holds a bright record in calling for the realization of the right to independence and to the self-determination of peoples and nations. As a member of the Committee on Decolonization, Afghanistan has actively participated in the struggles for freedom in Africa and other areas of the world, but now Afghanistan has once again, only a few years later, tragically fallen victim to the very attempts and onslaughts it helped oppose elsewhere, including invasion by mercenaries.

Expansionist forces intend to exploit Afghanistan's strategic location and to prey on its natural resources. We make this statement for the sake of the record of this institution, which was established for the attainment of the goals and ideals reflected in its Charter, maintains its neutrality, supports peoples' will and is based on the principles of sovereign equality of all States, irrespective of their size, geographical location and military or economic potentialities.

Independent news agencies around the globe have largely report on the Taliban's violation of human rights — especially women's rights — and of international humanitarian laws, on their heavy involvement in drug production and trafficking, and on their establishment of terrorist training camps for foreigners. We want to make it clear from this rostrum that the actions committed by the Taliban in the name of Islam and Afghanistan are contrary to our religion and culture.

Our history has never witnessed Afghans becoming involved in such shameful activities. What

has happened in Afghanistan is the work of outsiders who have been sent from across the border. As the *New York Times* of 4 November 1996 put it, some of the invaders have included those children who fled Afghanistan during the former Soviet occupation, took refuge abroad and were educated in *madrassa*, or religious schools, that preached prejudice, zealotry and obscurantism. Upon graduation or before, they were trained, armed and dispatched into Afghanistan.

It was the Taliban's inhuman treatment of women — including their public chain-lashing, indiscriminate amputation and mutilation — their "executions" of televisions and video cassette recorders, their burning of cassettes and office files, and their destruction of irreplaceable historic artifacts that have earned them international condemnation. These actions also caused the Taliban's friends much embarrassment, though until a few weeks ago they were dancing to the melody of victory songs.

The sudden low profile of the Taliban's supporters could hardly be considered a change of policy. These so-called progressive individuals who raised the banner of democracy and human rights were actually protecting and backing those who fiercely opposed the values they proclaimed. They were pursuing their own interests and considered the capture of Kabul by the obscurantist and retrograde Taliban as working in their favour. They are still under the impression that, through the Taliban, they can impose peace all over Afghanistan. In fact, there is popular resistance against the Taliban, even in the regions under their control.

This year, we witnessed a number of new, important developments in the framework of this global Organization in relation to the situation in Afghanistan. In April and October 1996, the Security Council convened meetings. At the meeting of 22 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1076 (1996). Afghanistan is grateful for the concern and efforts aimed at the restoration of peace in Afghanistan and welcomed this resolution.

We can say that the Security Council's resolution facilitated the drafting of the General Assembly's draft resolution on Afghanistan that is presently under our consideration. Here we would like to thank sincerely the drafting committee and the tireless efforts of the German delegation, especially those of His Excellency Mr. Tono Eitel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany, for the coordination of the drafting committee's work. We declare our support and readiness to ensure the implementation of the draft resolution to be adopted.

The initiative of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali to call for a meeting of concerned countries for Afghanistan on 18 November 1996 was a step in the right direction. Also, the gatherings about Afghanistan at Almaty, on 4 October 1996, and at Tehran on 29 October 1996 are to be commended. These meetings were aimed at creating an appropriate, positive atmosphere conducive to the restoration of peace and complete stability in our country.

We would also like to thank the European Union for issuing an important statement on Afghanistan on 28 October 1996.

Once again, we proclaim from this rostrum that the Islamic State of Afghanistan strongly and sincerely believes in a peaceful solution of the conflict and seriously supports the valuable efforts rendered by the United Nations Special Mission, headed by Mr. Norbert Holl. As indicated in the proclamation of the Supreme Council for the Defence of Afghanistan and duly reflected in our statement in the Security Council on 16 October 1996, we strongly support an immediate and lasting ceasefire based upon the demilitarization of Kabul, the creation of a neutral police force in the capital and the establishment of a transitional Government of national unity encompassing all major Afghan sides. The military option cannot offer a solution to the present Afghan crisis. Power cannot be monopolized at gunpoint by one party or tribe in Afghanistan.

Political negotiations, along with United Nations mediation and cooperation, can create a basis that all sides can endorse and commit themselves to. The collection of heavy weapons, the designation of military barracks for armed groups, the establishment of a transitional Government of national unity, the drafting of a constitution and electoral law and supervision of the implementation of agreements can be worked out and conducted only through political negotiations. To achieve this, the United Nations Special Mission is required to introduce an appropriate mechanism through which authorized representatives of parties to the conflict can get together and create a blueprint for a final national peace accord. In a letter dated 16 October 1996 to the Secretary-General

(A/51/511), we have provided the details regarding this matter.

As regards relations with neighbouring countries, the Islamic State of Afghanistan believes in fraternal and friendly ties based on the principles of equality of States, mutual respect and beneficial cooperation. Afghanistan serves as a transit State between the North, South, East and West. As a landlocked country, it desires sincere mutual relations and cooperation with all the countries of the region. Afghanistan, on the basis of its supreme national interests and needs, has followed a policy of non-alignment since the inception of the Non-Aligned Movement. In a post-cold-war world, we are still part of that Movement. Non-involvement in any commitment of a military or political character against other countries has been and continues to be our foreign-policy guideline. Our loyalty to the Charter of the United Nations, the realization of democratic and Islamic values, respect for international instruments on human rights and fair judgement on major world issues are the pillars of our foreign policy.

We recognize the existence of important constructive points in the Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/51/698 of 26 November 1996. We hope that the adoption of the draft resolution under consideration will convince those who have chosen the military option to sincerely cooperate with the United Nations Special Mission, headed by Mr. Norbert Holl, in the restoration of national unity and peace throughout the country. We also hope that the world community will not allow our nation to be subjected to further suffering as a result of continued foreign intervention.

We hope that the peace initiative for the demilitarization of Kabul, the capital, and intra-Afghan dialogue will be implemented. We expect the Taliban not to stand in the way of the implementation of United Nations resolutions or to try to further prolong and expand their expansionist military activities. They must abandon their policy of maintaining their rule through the military occupation of the capital. But should they not, fighting in Kabul will be inevitable. Continuation of the military subjugation of the capital has become unbearable to the Afghans and to those providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan throughout the world.

We are cognizant of the fact that the prime responsibility for not allowing our territory to be turned once again into a battleground for the pursuit of outside political and strategic interests rests upon the Afghans. However, due to the complexity of the outside involvement, we, the Afghans, call on this Organization, as the beacon of hope for small nations, to assist us in the achievement of that goal and to save us from further destruction and our region from protracted conflict and instability.

I cannot conclude without expressing thanks on behalf of Afghanistan to all those States sponsors the draft resolution on Afghanistan.

Mr. Shah (India): Since the General Assembly last considered the situation in Afghanistan on 19 December 1995 and adopted resolution 50/88, the United Nations has paid greater attention to Afghanistan than it had previously. We have had the benefit of periodic reports on the situation. The Security Council has issued two presidential statements and unanimously adopted the first Security Council resolution on Afghanistan on 22 October 1996. The Secretary-General, on 18 November 1996, convened a meeting of regional and other States with influence and interest in Afghanistan. India welcomes that belated effort to focus on what the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, has termed an "orphan" or "forgotten" conflict.

Let me, first of all, summarize the principal elements of India's approach to the situation in Afghanistan. India fully supports the unity, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan. Those are essential for the well-being of the Afghan people and, given Afghanistan's strategic location, for the peace and stability of the entire region. A cessation of foreign interference in Afghanistan is an essential prerequisite for the resolution of the situation. The situation has to be resolved through peaceful discussions and negotiations between the Afghan parties.

A special responsibility devolves on Afghan leaders to forsake the path of confrontation and conflict and to pursue peace, which will lead to reconciliation, renewal and reconstruction in Afghanistan. There should be full realization that there can be no military solution. We fully support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative in bringing peace to Afghanistan. The United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan has pursued its task with patience and commitment. India is prepared to play its full part in supporting their efforts.

The cessation of violence and armed hostilities and the demilitarization of Kabul would provide the right conditions for the political process. These should be actively pursued. The cessation of armed hostilities requires the stoppage of the supply of arms to Afghanistan. The effective implementation of this idea would have to be carefully worked out. The growth in drug trafficking and terrorism, a result of the conflict in Afghanistan, is a matter of concern.

Recent developments in Afghanistan have evoked concern in the international community at large. While General Assembly resolution 50/88 urged all Afghan parties to renounce the use of force and to settle their political differences by peaceful means, some groups remained intransigent and refused to engage in any negotiations or discussions.

The Secretary-General, in his report contained in document A/51/698, has revealed that one of the first acts of the Taliban administration in Kabul was the extrajudicial murder of the former President Najibullah and his brother. This brutal and abhorrent act was all the more shocking because they were under the charge of the United Nations, which was duty-bound to protect them. Members of the family of the former President have been guests in India since 1992 and the Government of India will do all that is required to look after their welfare.

The pursuit of an obscurantist doctrine by the Taliban leadership and the consequent denial of human rights, especially the rights of women and girls, have been catalogued in various United Nations reports, *inter alia*, those contained in A/51/481, A/51/698 and A/51/704. It also has been widely denounced, including by the Security Council in its resolution 1076 (1996). As a practicing democracy with a firm commitment to human rights, India has felt disturbed and distressed at these developments.

We are also disturbed by recent news reports in *The Independent*, published from London, of terrorist training camps being run in the Khost area. The fundamentalist managers of these camps and their sponsors are reportedly seeking to disrupt life in India. While the consequences of imparting training to such youth will only recoil on the societies that promote such activities, these are activities which cannot but cause us extreme concern.

There is also the related problem of illicit production of narcotics. According to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, opium production in Afghanistan quadrupled in the period 1989-1996 and now comprises approximately 40 per cent of global production. There are ominous signs that the cultivation of opium and the smuggling of narcotics out of Afghanistan are now being organized as a means of raising resources by some groups for purchasing arms and spreading terror.

India and Afghanistan have close civilizational affinities and are bound by ties of brotherhood, friendship and cooperation in many areas. The unsettled conditions in Afghanistan have a direct and adverse fallout on peace and security in the region and affect my country. Our interaction with Afghanistan has been constructive and positive. India is prepared to continue to play its part in full in assisting efforts to restore peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan. With this goal in mind, we have been involved in United Nations and regional endeavours and participated in the meeting called by the Secretary-General at United Nations headquarters on 18 November and the earlier regional conference organized in Tehran on 29 and 30 October.

The Secretary-General's report on emergency assistance to Afghanistan, contained in document A/51/704, graphically highlights the alarming dimensions of the humanitarian crisis and the vital need for reconstruction and to rebuild the social and economic infrastructure of Afghanistan. Yet, the response of the international community has been disheartening. Less than 50 per cent of the consolidated appeal of $124 million for 1995-1996 could be met. This is a marked decline both in quantitative and percentile terms from the position in 1994-95. We earnestly hope that the enhanced appeal of $133 million for 1997 will evoke a more favourable response.

Despite serious resource constraints, India has consistently contributed to the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, both bilaterally and through United Nations agencies. During the past seven years, our assistance to Afghanistan has exceeded 220 million rupees. This value is calculated at costs prevalent in India and would be much higher if calculated at international prices. More than 80,000 Afghans have sought and been given refuge in India. In the past, we have also had a vigorous economic and technical cooperation programme, as part of which a major 200-bed children's hospital was established in

Kabul. India has assisted in setting up a hydroelectric project and an industrial estate. Even during the most uncertain recent conditions, India has continued to provide assistance. We organized a camp for fitting artificial limbs, mostly for victims of landmine in Kabul, in August and September of this year, despite these uncertain conditions. Over 1,100 persons benefited from this camp. India will participate in the international forum on assistance to Afghanistan to be held in Ashkhabad on 21 and 22 January 1997.

India has an abiding interest in the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan. We are glad that the United Nations has begun to refocus attention on the situation in Afghanistan. We underline the central role of the United Nations in helping the Afghan parties to define and implement the peace process. We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General in associating a broad group of countries with interest and influence in Afghanistan in his efforts towards finding a solution, and we reiterate our commitment to contribute productively towards finding a solution in Afghanistan.

Mr. Holohan (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries — Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — align themselves with this statement. Iceland and Norway have also aligned themselves with this statement.

The conflict in Afghanistan is a matter of serious concern to the European Union and to the entire international community. The Secretary-General, in his report of 26 November, pointed out that the suffering of the Afghan civilian population, which continues to bear the main brunt of the civil war, and the dangers that that war creates for regional stability oblige the international community to intensify its search for a peaceful solution.

The European Union accordingly repeats the call made in its declaration of 28 October for the immediate cessation of hostilities in order to prevent further destruction and loss of life. We strongly urge all parties to seek a peaceful settlement through negotiation that will ultimately result in a political solution bringing peace and stability to the country. Only negotiation and cooperation between the parties can offer the opportunity for a new and stable Afghanistan to emerge and to which all its people can freely owe allegiance.

The European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. It urges all States to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. In particular, the flow of arms and military equipment into Afghanistan from outside its borders must end. In this regard, the European Union is currently giving serious consideration to the imposition of an embargo on the export of arms, munitions and military dual-use equipment. We also appeal to the Afghan parties to stop the use of landmines, in view of the high number of innocent civilians falling victim to these weapons.

The European Union furthermore remains concerned about the use of Afghan territory for the production of drugs and the training of terrorists, with destabilizing effects for the region and beyond.

No society can achieve an acceptable degree of peace, justice and stability without full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The European Union therefore calls on all the parties in Afghanistan to act in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and to respect human rights. The European Union can no more accept discrimination on the basis of gender than it can tolerate discrimination on the basis of race or religion. We wish, accordingly, to express particular concern over the recent measures restricting female employment and the education of girls. We support fully the statements already made to this effect by the Secretary-General and other United Nations representatives. We recall, in particular, the terms of Security Council resolution 1076 (1996) of 22 October 1996, in which the Council denounced such discrimination as well as other violations of human rights in Afghanistan. We point out, in this context, that among the instruments formally signed by Afghanistan is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Likewise, the security of all international personnel involved in the provision and distribution of humanitarian aid must be guaranteed. The European Union and its member States are the largest donors of aid to Afghanistan. In 1996, the European Community contributed a total of 43 million ECU. This is a role which we are willing to continue and we look forward to a dialogue on the modalities of cooperation to ensure assistance for all the people of Afghanistan, irrespective of their gender, ethnic or religious background. We also demand that the rights and

immunities under international law of the United Nations and its specialized agencies be fully respected.

In conclusion, the European Union wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm its full support for the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan. It calls upon all Afghan parties to cooperate closely with the Special Mission, which is uniquely placed to act as an impartial mediator in the search for peace. We furthermore welcome the continuation of consultations by the Special Mission with neighbouring and other countries and with regional institutions. We are pleased to refer, in this context, to the important meeting convened by the Secretary-General, which was held here at United Nations headquarters on 18 November. Not least, we wish to express our appreciation for the intensive work being undertaken by the head of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, Mr. Norbert Holl, and by his dedicated team of collaborators. They must be given every support in their important task.

Mr. Guehm (United States of America): The draft resolution before us is a painful reminder that Afghanistan remains deeply divided and its future most uncertain. Human suffering, deprivation and lack of basic freedoms are widespread. Instability in Afghanistan is both a result of outside interference and a threat to those neighbouring States which seek to manipulate events within the country.

Today we mark the fourth annual authorization of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan. Members of this body have a right to ask what we can expect from the Special Mission after three years and no peace. Will 1997 be the year that the warring parties give up their senseless struggle for a military victory and agree to a ceasefire? Will this be the beginning of a political process leading to the re-establishment of peace, law and order and the reconstruction of this war-torn nation? My Government fervently hopes so.

This month marks the seventeenth anniversary of nearly constant war in Afghanistan. The experience of an entire generation of Afghans has been little more than violence and bloodshed. The majority of young Afghan men have no normal profession, no ordinary job other than carrying a gun. The main livelihood for many is trafficking in drugs, weapons and other contraband.

Women and girls also face the indignities and deprivations imposed by the Taliban, such as the denial of their basic rights to work and to be educated. This draft resolution strongly expresses its condemnation of such practices. The General Assembly human rights resolution on Afghanistan voices the same views at greater length.

Yet despite this bleak picture, we believe there is still hope for a political settlement in Afghanistan. In his report to the General Assembly of 26 November, the Secretary-General indicated a certain encouragement about the prospects for progress. He noted, in this connection, the positive responses of 19 countries which, together with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, attended a special meeting on Afghanistan in New York on 18 November. At that meeting, which my Government attended, all participants, including all of the Governments of the region, supported the basic elements of a political settlement in Afghanistan. These elements have been incorporated in the draft resolution we are adopting today and include respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; respect for the basic human rights of all individuals and groups, without regard to ethnicity or gender; affirmation of the central role of the United Nations Special Mission in negotiating a ceasefire and in taking specific steps leading to peace and national reconciliation; and agreement that foreign interference, in particular the supply of arms and ammunition to the warring parties, should end.

In short, this draft resolution provides a comprehensive blueprint for the peace and security of Afghanistan, for resettling refugees, for beginning the process of reconstruction and for repairing the country's war-torn infrastructure. It is time now to get on with these urgent tasks.

In conclusion, my Government wishes to express its deep gratitude to the delegation of Germany for the superb job its members have done in guiding this draft resolution to a successful conclusion for the third straight year.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): May I begin by expressing our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on developments in Afghanistan from July to November 1996 and on emergency assistance to Afghanistan.

May I also express our appreciation for the efforts made by the United Nations and its Special Mission to

Afghanistan, under the leadership of Mr. Norbert Holl, for their efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the protracted and complex problem of Afghanistan.

It is a source of grave concern that, according to paragraph 16 of the Secretary-General's report (A/51/698), for the first time in recent history, Afghanistan is divided between north and south. This division, as the paragraph states, is not only military but also ethnic. My delegation cannot help but note that such a division cannot reflect the true will of the Afghan people. It merely reflects the ambitions to hegemony of the leaders of the Afghan factions.

We should like to state that the preservation of Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity is an indivisible principle that must be upheld.

My delegation stated last October when the Security Council adopted its resolution 1076 (1996), and I should like to reaffirm now, that a correct analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan shows that the principal problem does not stop with ethnic and religious differences. Rather, each of the factions, without exception, is trying to get hold of power. This has made Afghanistan a centre for criminal activities, such as drug and arms trafficking, which now threaten neighbouring States. Indeed, Afghanistan has become a centre for training extremists and terrorists from which many States have suffered, including mine.

We hope that all States will respond to the political efforts recently made by the United Nations, and stop providing material or military assistance to any of the factions. This would make it easier to achieve a peaceful settlement, and to create a broad, representative interim administration representing all factions and all segments of Afghanistan.

A source of deep concern is the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, in particular the laying of approximately 10 million landmines; the lack of food, particularly now that winter is coming; the tragedy of refugees and displaced persons; and the restrictions being imposed on women. All these require a great deal of attention from the international community so that a settlement can be quickly reached, and also so that the necessary material and humanitarian support can be provided.

Such assistance, however, must be linked to the degree to which the factions work towards a peaceful settlement. In this context, we urge all States to respond to the United Nations unified appeal announced by Mr. Yasushi Akashi a few days ago.

Together with the States of the region and other interested States, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Egypt participated in the meeting called by the Secretary-General on 18 November 1996. We share the Secretary-General's satisfaction that the international community now seems prepared to re-focus its attention on the situation in Afghanistan. We also support the contents of the Secretary-General's report and his intention to hold further meetings of that group of countries.

We hope that in the next few months the Afghan people will be able to heal their wounds. We also hope that the Afghan leadership have the will to start a genuine, wide-ranging political dialogue through which national reconciliation may be achieved in order to rehabilitate and rebuild Afghanistan. As one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/51/L.49, Egypt thus looks forward to its adoption by consensus. We also would like to express our appreciation for the important and positive role played by the German delegation in coordinating consultations on this draft resolution.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports in documents A/51/698 and A/51/704, on the overall situation in Afghanistan, the implementation of the emergency humanitarian assistance programme in that war-stricken country, and the work of the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan. We would also like to express our gratitude and full support for the tireless efforts of the United Nations Special Mission, led by Mr. Norbert Holl.

More than four years have gone by since encouraging changes took place in the political situation in Afghanistan after a long and painful struggle for the liberation of that country. The establishment of an interim Government in Kabul at that time had given us hope that, at long last, all Afghans would put aside their differences and start the process of reconciliation. We had hoped that this would allow a broad-based reconciliation process, including all groups, to begin. However, we have been greatly disappointed by the resumption and continuation of the armed conflict, which has increased the suffering of the Afghan people and has led to the total devastation of the economic infrastructure of the country. The renewed conflict has

deepened the refugee crisis, affecting not only Afghanistan but also neighbouring countries in the region.

The present situation has not been chosen by the Afghan people. Throughout history, Afghanistan — situated on the fault-line of spheres of influence and rivalries between major Powers — has been a battleground of conflicting interests and ideologies. That country and its proud people have paid a very heavy price for that geographic distinction. It is time for the international community to correct this historic injustice. Afghanistan deserves a rapid return to normalcy, peace, security and stability. Only then will the Afghan people be able to devote all their energy to reconstruction and to the economic and social development of their country.

Another truth is that, despite immense hardships, the Afghan people have always been successful in resisting outside intervention and aggression. Throughout history they have preserved their unity and national identity. They have not succumbed to attempts that would have resulted in fragmentation on ethnic or sectarian grounds. Today, Afghanistan is again faced with similar threats. We in Turkey do not have the slightest doubt that the Afghan people will once again resist and defeat threats to their unity and national identity.

The fundamental responsibility of the international community under the present circumstances is unreservedly to respect and support Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, strictly to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, to respect the right of the Afghan people to determine their own destiny, and to abstain from any move that could further aggravate or complicate the situation. It is also crucial at this point that third countries should refrain from providing weapons and ammunition to the warring parties, since any military assistance given to one of the parties will induce that group to seek superiority on the ground and consequently discourage it from engaging in negotiations. This in turn will lead to counter-measures by the other parties and to the spiralling of the arms race.

Turkey is among the sponsors of the draft resolution submitted under the agenda items 21 (c) and 39. Our gratitude goes to the German delegation for the exemplary manner in which it has conducted the long and delicate work of coordinating the preparation of this text. We also thank the other interested delegations which have been closely involved in the drafting of this resolution.

Resolution 50/88, adopted by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, and Security Council resolution 1076 (1996), adopted two months ago, laid the guidelines for the peace process in Afghanistan. And we are now trying to build upon them.

We deem the Secretary-General's meeting on Afghanistan, which was convened on 18 November 1996 in New York, an important step on the way to bringing about a peaceful solution to the crisis in Afghanistan. We hope that the convergence of ideas witnessed at the conference can help the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan to convince the parties that the way out of this crisis can be only through political dialogue. We also welcome the Secretary-General's intention to convene further meetings of the group in the future.

The most urgent priority today is to secure an immediate ceasefire. Only then can we work to help the Afghan parties in a serious political dialogue to achieve national reconciliation. However, past experience teaches us that as long as Kabul is controlled by only one of the parties, the other groups will be reluctant to embark on meaningful negotiations. For this reason, options like putting Kabul, at least for a temporary period, under the control of the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) or a collective administration of the warring parties, should be given serious consideration before an attempt is made to launch the negotiation process. We should also bear in mind that the demilitarization of Kabul would be a prerequisite for the realization of any of these options because, otherwise, the ceasefire will not hold.

In this respect, my country attaches special importance to the continuation of the constructive role the OIC has been playing to forge a common understanding among the parties in Afghanistan and welcomes the recent visit of the OIC delegation to Afghanistan. We understand that the efforts of the OIC are being conducted, as in the past, in close cooperation and coordination with the United Nations Special Mission and are complementary in nature to those of the United Nations.

We believe that a durable peace in Afghanistan can be brought about only through the establishment of

an all-inclusive and broad-based Government. As we all point out at every opportunity, lasting peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan can be accomplished only through the exercise of the free will of the people of Afghanistan. The cooperation of the Afghan people, and especially their leaders, is essential if a way out of this crisis is to be found. My Government once again urges all Afghan parties to embark on the path towards national reconciliation through peaceful means and political dialogue.

There is, of course, a continuing need for urgent humanitarian assistance to the suffering people of war-stricken Afghanistan. In this respect, we strongly support the appeal in the relevant paragraphs of the draft resolution to all Member States to provide all possible financial, technical and material assistance for the repatriation and settlement of Afghan refugees and displaced persons. It is hoped that the international community will actively respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan by generously contributing to the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund set up for this purpose. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend all relevant United Nations agencies taking part in the emergency humanitarian assistance programme for Afghanistan for their strenuous efforts to remedy the humanitarian situation despite all the various difficulties they have been facing.

On the other hand, a longer-range programme of economic and reconstruction assistance is also required. But this can be envisaged only after conditions of peace, security and stability are established. It would still provide an incentive to the people of Afghanistan if we were to begin thinking about a tangible economic-reconstruction package which could be made available to a broad-based Government at a certain stage of the future peace process.

I would like to reiterate that Turkey is ready to do everything within its ability to contribute to the realization of peace in Afghanistan. I would also like to take this opportunity to repeat my Government's offer to host, if necessary, a United Nations-sponsored conference in Turkey with the participation of all the parties involved to hold the necessary negotiations aimed at bringing about reconciliation and a settlement based on the principles we all believe in.

Inspired by the long historical and close cultural bonds between Turkey and Afghanistan, we stand ready to fulfil our share of the responsibility falling to the international community to assist the Afghan people on the path to reconciliation and to help them preserve Afghanistan's territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence and national unity.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): The views of my delegation on the situation in Afghanistan have already been stated in great detail — before the plenary of this Assembly during its general debate in October, before the Security Council, also in October, and at the meeting of regional States and other States with influence in Afghanistan convened by the Secretary-General in this building in November — and therefore do not need to be repeated.

It is sad to see the proud land of Afghanistan, rich in history and culture, present such a pathetic picture of turmoil and turbulence. It is sadder still to see those who are primarily responsible for the situation in Afghanistan today, others who sat on the sidelines in acquiescence during the rape of that country and population or those who from the inside were in positions of power to do what was necessary, but did not, and neither have the de facto or the *de jure* status to do anything today present themselves and project themselves as saviours of that country and champions of non-interference, non-intervention and non-military means. This is an imputation of credulity on our part, as well as on the part of this Assembly and the Afghan people.

Afghanistan continues to go through sad times and turmoil, essentially because of the inability of some to understand that a solution can be found only in dialogue and in a broad-based search for stability in a united, sovereign and territorially integral Afghanistan. That requires an understanding among the Afghans themselves that it is in their interest to end their internecine fighting, to respect the ethnic diversity and realities of their land and to let their country and its population move forward towards the peace and security which alone would enable Afghanistan to start rebuilding itself after close to two decades of war and turmoil and to enable the million-plus refugees still in Pakistan and other neighbouring countries to return to their homeland with honour and dignity.

The situation in Afghanistan continues to have a severe impact on Pakistan. So close are the links between the two countries that instability in Afghanistan automatically affects the Pakistani border

provinces in the north and in the west. Afghanistan has also become the source of terrorist attacks in Pakistan, fomented from within and outside of Afghanistan. As we are so deeply concerned, we have lent our full support to the United Nations Special Mission in all its efforts to search for a formula which would enable it to bring the Afghan factions together. We will continue to do so in order to concentrate on the real tasks at hand: clearing the 10 million or so mines left behind wantonly by Soviet Russian occupation forces and others planted by the former authorities in Kabul earlier this year, the rehabilitation of the thousands who have lost limbs as a result and whose ability to earn a livelihood has been so severely restricted and, above all, the reconstruction of that country, its infrastructure and its economy. Meanwhile, it is necessary for humanitarian assistance to continue to flow to the needy in Afghanistan without being conditioned on extraneous criteria. Pakistan has always contributed more than its fair share in this humanitarian effort and it will continue to do so.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Norbert Holl, assisted in some measure by the initiatives taken by Pakistan, there appears to be a broader understanding today on ceasefire and an exchange of prisoners and the setting up of a 12-member commission, hopefully under United Nations and Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) auspices, to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire between the Taliban on the one side and the alliance led by General Dostum on the other. We were able to assist in bringing about this understanding because we had maintained contact with all the factions in Afghanistan and because it was understood that Pakistan wanted to help the Afghans agree among themselves on a just, equitable and peaceful solution. We hope that this understanding will lead to an agreement. Followed by a further agreement that once a ceasefire has come into effect there should be a political commission, consisting of representatives of all the provinces, which could discuss and agree upon the modalities of the demobilization of armed militias and the collection of heavy weapons, the formation and induction of a neutral Afghan force, comprising representatives from all provinces to provide peace and security in Kabul, and the formation of a broad-based Government which could address constitutional issues and the revival of Afghan national institutions.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call on the observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Peyrovi (Organization of the Islamic Conference): On behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), I thank the Assembly for this opportunity to address it on the situation in Afghanistan.

We have before us the reports of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in documents A/51/698 and A/51/704. The reports are lucid, concise and clear, and I take this opportunity to express the OIC's appreciation to ,the Secretary-General not only for the timely presentation of this useful material but also for the continuing, untiring efforts towards finding an honourable solution to the Afghanistan question in cooperation with the OIC.

At this meeting the OIC once again joins the United Nations in expressing its continued concern over the loss of life, heavy injuries and colossal destruction of property that the nation has endured since its liberation. Throughout the years of the civil war my organization has unreservedly focused its endeavours on the promotion of the cessation of hostilities in Afghanistan so that the necessary climate for a credible peace process leading to the formation of a broad-based representative Government can be created.

In the OIC's contacts with the various Afghan leaders, especially during its missions to the country, it has consistently tried to make them see the futility of resorting to the use of force and of seeking a military solution instead of negotiating to find a common, workable settlement to their present predicament. We have tried to help them realize from the lessons of history that the results of a heroic struggle for liberation from foreign invaders are normally very different from those of wresting the reins of Government from one's own people in one's own land through other than lawful and peaceful means.

While we all continue to advocate neutrality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, as we must, we cannot, however, remain oblivious to the fact that the effects of instability and chaos in a country are also felt beyond its borders. So let us recognize that what is happening inside Afghanistan could not have left its neighbours completely unaffected. Therefore, the return of peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan should bring relief, in both political and economic terms, to the Governments

and peoples of those other countries that have also been the victims in varying degrees of, first, the foreign occupation and now of the civil war in Afghanistan. We believe that to discourage the continuity of unstable conditions and to prevent further escalation of the internal armed conflict, it behooves all States to play a constructive role by preventing the sale and supply of arms to any and all factions in Afghanistan at this time. Their role in preventing the harbouring and training of terrorists and in eliminating the devastating drug trafficking will also be crucial to the containment of the present problem in Afghanistan.

We in the OIC are complementing the United Nations in our collective efforts to assist the diverse Afghan leadership, to the extent it is humanly possible within our limited means, to bring back peace and tranquillity to their country and to restore, among other things, the precious human rights, including those of women and children, that have been so trampled in the turmoil.

Towards this end, a number of high-level OIC missions have been sent to Afghanistan. In the discussions with various Afghan leaders during these missions, the convening of a meeting of representatives of all Afghan factions inside and outside Afghanistan to explore and develop a commonly acceptable framework for addressing the country's political and security issues, including a peaceful transfer of power, has been proposed and actively pursued, in accordance with relevant United Nations and OIC resolutions.

In renewing the call for such a broad-based meeting of Afghan leaders, we now have the conclusions of the recent meeting in Tehran, which was convened at the initiative of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in which the United Nations and the OIC both participated. We also have a detailed reference in the Secretary-General's reports (A/51/698, A/51/704) to the deliberations of the meeting of representatives of regional States and other States with influence in Afghanistan, which he convened here in New York on 18 November 1996, and in which my organization also participated.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference is prepared to work with the United Nations to convene a meeting of the leaders of the various Afghan factions in any location agreeable to the participants in that meeting, such as Jeddah, for instance. Adequate conference facilities will be made available at that location in pursuance of the objectives I spoke of a moment ago.

I take this opportunity to inform the General Assembly that a high-level OIC mission recently visited Afghanistan again, as well as some other countries in the region, to complement the United Nations efforts for reconciliation that are currently under way.

The draft resolution (A/51/L.49) before the General Assembly, which has been so eloquently introduced by His Excellency Mr. Tono Eitel, Permanent Representative of Germany, reflects the sincere desire of the international community for an end to the hostilities and the grave uncertainties being endured in Afghanistan. It also advocates the need to usher in an era of peace and stability in the country through the establishment of a broad-based, representative Government. We support the draft resolution and hope that its adoption and implementation will bring in the fresh air of healthy change for the people of Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I reiterate the numerous calls of the Secretary-General of the OIC, His Excellency Mr. Hamid Algabid, for the immediate cessation of hostilities in Afghanistan by all parties involved in the conflict; the prevention of the sale and supply of arms to all factions in Afghanistan; and for the immediate introduction of confidence-building measures leading to the convening of a meeting of representatives of the various Afghan parties and personalities, including perhaps the King, and of important segments of Afghan society, to evolve an agreed programme to promote a peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem.

I should like to reassure the General Assembly of my organization's full commitment to play a constructive role complementary to that of the United Nations to facilitate the mission of the United Nations Special Representative, Mr. Norbert Holl, and the overall peace process in Afghanistan.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that, in order to allow the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to review programme budget implications on draft resolution A/51/L.49, action on the draft resolution is postponed to Tuesday, 17 December.

Agenda item 21 ***(continued)***

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/51/315, A/51/353 and A/51/528)

Draft resolutions (A/51/L.27/Rev.1, A/51/L.37/Rev.1 and A/51/L.50/Rev.1)

Draft decision (A/51/L.43)

(d) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/171)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.41)

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Said Omar Said Ahmed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Comoros, to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.27/Rev.1.

Mr. Ahmed (Comoros) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me once again to extend from this lofty rostrum my most heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Razali Ismail on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. This unanimous homage paid to you by the international community is likewise a tribute to your great country, Malaysia, with which the Comoros has good relations of cooperation and friendship.

I should like also to take this opportunity to extend our deepest condolences to the families and friendly countries that lost loved ones in the air disaster that took place a few weeks ago off the Comoros coast. We Comorians would have wished to save more human lives; but what could we have done to cope with such circumstances when our State lacks the appropriate resources? All this is due to a financial and economic crisis that has lasted for too long — at least a decade now.

I should like briefly to describe for consideration by the Assembly the difficult economic situation that my country, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, is currently facing. The economy of the Comoros depends essentially on agriculture, which provides almost all of its export earnings, representing 40 per cent of its gross domestic product. Its major export crops are ylang-ylang, vanilla and cloves, but these traditional crops are now facing stiff competition in world markets because of the drop in clove and ylang-ylang prices and because of the development of synthetic products to substitute for vanilla.

The Comoros also has to cope with many constraints that hinder its economic and social development. Our small size, compounded by the separation of the Comorian island of Mayotte from our country, and our geographic isolation, high birthrate, limited natural resources and abnormally high cost of international transport, all are elements that reduce the competitiveness of the national economy. This is further compounded by frequent and devastating hurricanes. In addition, the institutional political instability that prevailed between 1990 and 1995, marked by 17 successive Governments, exacerbated an already unfavourable situation.

The events of 28 September 1995, during which an army of international mercenaries invaded my country, overthrew the President of the Republic, disrupted constitutional order and, consequently, State institutions, further worsened our economic crisis and led to substantial material losses and structural damage. The people and the Government of Comoros have made great efforts to help the most affected and destitute segments of the population. To respond to those urgent humanitarian needs, the Government, lacking other resources, had to redeploy, on an emergency basis, a major part of the State budget and financial resources normally devoted to vital economic and social programmes.

The Government does not have the means to carry out the reconstruction and development projects that are essential to the survival of our nation. Therefore, the President of the Islamic Republic of the Comoros, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Taki Abdoulkarim, and through him the entire people of the Comoros, urgently appeal to the international community to come to our aid immediately. Our stability and our young democracy depend on that assistance, as democracy cannot be preached to a population that is hungry and concerned about its future.

Finally, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank from the bottom of my heart the organizations and friendly countries that are working in the Comoros to relieve the suffering of our population.

Before concluding, allow me to express the shared view of the Government of Comoros and the African Group of the United Nations on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte. Since His Excellency Mohamed Taki Abdoulkarim took office as Head of State, various contacts have been established between the French and the Comorian Governments on this item. Both Governments have announced their readiness to consider the question progressively in an appropriate framework: a joint French-Comorian commission. For that reason and to further reduce tensions, the Comorian Government and the African Group of the United Nations, following joint efforts, request for the second time that consideration of the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte be deferred to a later date but that it be retained on the agenda of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

During the most recent session of the Organization of African Unity, held at Yaoundé last July, a resolution was adopted on the Comorian island of Mayotte that called on both parties concerned to resort to dialogue to resolve, in their best interests, their differences of the last two decades. My country adheres unreservedly to that new approach, which also requires the support and encouragement of the international community as a whole.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Djibouti to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.37/Rev.1.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): It is with a measure of both pride and sadness that I bring to the attention of the General Assembly the revised draft resolution (A/51/L.37/Rev.1) on "Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia". There is pride in the simple fact that so many Members of our Organization have sponsored this draft resolution — one that clearly evidences the persistent concern of the international community for Somalia and its people.

We all are intimately familiar with the trials and tribulations that Somalia has suffered, from drought to starvation to the collapse of health, education and social facilities, to warfare and the total disregard of human rights to wanton killings, resulting ultimately in political, social and economic disintegration. The daily life of the average Somali has become a nightmare; misery, suffering and uncertainty continue. This draft resolution, at heart, proclaims that the world has not forgotten Somalia; that it has not been abandoned; that we still care for its people. There is a large measure of pride in that for all of us.

The draft resolution also notes with concern the political instability and the absence of central authority, and that in many parts of the country, the humanitarian and security situation has worsened. A large part of the Somali people are in dire need, which the draft resolution underscores in recalling Security Council resolution 733 (1992), which urged all parties, movements and factions in Somalia to facilitate the efforts of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the humanitarian organizations to provide urgent assistance to the affected population. That effort is still required and must continue.

The draft resolution rightly emphasizes the principle that the Somali people, in particular at the local level, have the primary responsibility for their own development and for the sustainability of rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance programmes. That, over the long term, will be possible only where there is a real and concurrent effort by all the Somali parties, movements and factions to terminate hostilities and engage in a national reconciliation process that allows, as the draft states, for transition from relief to reconstruction and development, and that respects fully the security and safety of United Nations, non-governmental organizations and other personnel engaged in this process.

The draft resolution before us cannot be described as political. It advances the cause of no one, except the people of Somalia and the international community. It is a humanitarian call for a renewal of efforts to refocus on a people in dire need, as are so many in the world. We must assist Somalia's return to life and continue to build upon the continued and tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and those States and organizations that have responded to this appeal for assistance. To ignore the basic appeal of this draft resolution will only result in more desperate ones in the near future.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, in view of the critical situation in Somalia, to take all necessary measures for the implementation of the current draft resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session. I am quite confident, therefore, that this draft resolution will receive, as usual, the full backing of the Assembly in its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Bakala (Congo) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the African Group, I am honoured to introduce the draft decision appearing in document A/51/L.43, entitled "Special assistance to the front-line States and other neighbouring States".

This draft decision has been prepared in the light of the new state of affairs — namely, peace and democracy — in southern Africa. As members are aware, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has created an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, which effectively supersedes the front-line States. This draft decision, therefore, reflects the need to orient future cooperation between the United Nations and southern Africa towards cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community.

Draft decision A/51/L.43 expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts regarding assistance to the front-line States and other neighbouring States. It also notes with appreciation the sustained support that the international community has rendered to those States, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/528. It also urges the international community to continue to provide fruitful cooperation with the Southern Africa Development Community in order to assist it in the efforts of the countries of the region towards the reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of their economies.

Under this draft decision, the item on special assistance to the front-line States and other neighbouring States, would no longer be considered under agenda item 21 and that it now be dealt with under the agenda item dealing with cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Rwanda, who will introduce draft resolution A/51/L.50/Rev.1.

Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda): Allow me to express our gratitude to all delegations to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly for making it possible to reach a consensus on draft resolution A/51/L.50/Rev.1, entitled "International assistance to Rwanda for the reintegration of returning refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development", which the Assembly is about to adopt.

We are especially grateful to the following countries, which have sponsored this draft resolution: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Zimbabwe.

Draft resolution A/51/L.50 was reissued as A/51/L.50/Rev.1 because it has been updated with an additional preambular paragraph, the seventh, which reads as follows:

> "Welcoming the meeting on refugee reintegration in the Great Lakes region, convened at Geneva on 23 November 1996."

This ties in with operative paragraph 6, which refers to the same meeting.

(spoke in French)

Recent developments have been such that Rwanda has been pleasantly surprised by the unprecedented mass return of refugees — something for which the Government and the people of Rwanda had long hoped. The sons and daughters of our country have finally seen the light. They have understood the logic of the situation and have rightly shaken off their abductors, who had held them hostage for two and a half years.

The return movement began on Friday, 15 November 1996. The Government of Rwanda, with the President of the Republic at its head, went to the Rwanda-Zaire border to welcome and to extend a message of greetings to these compatriots. The Government's enthusiasm was boundless, and every precaution was taken despite the possible difficulties arising from the number of people requiring service and their tremendous needs. The Government of

Rwanda has shouldered all of its responsibilities in resettling all these refugees and reintegrating them into their homeland, with the means that have been and will be made available by the international community, within the framework of active solidarity with the Rwandese people. Today, the Rwandese people has been mobilized to welcome their fellow citizens.

This is a humanitarian crisis which must be handled with assistance commensurate with the scale of this mass repatriation. The number of Rwandese refugees who have returned from Zaire since 15 November 1996 is between 680,000 and 700,000. We expect to receive between 400,000 and 500,000 refugees from Tanzania before the end of this year. This is in addition to a large number of individuals who escaped the genocide and other refugees who have returned to Rwanda since 1994. We hope that the intimidators and the political leaders will not prevent them from returning and try to keep them in the refugee camps simply for their own political purposes and to the detriment of the well-being of the refugees. To this end, what we need is a genuine mobilization of resources consonant with the urgent needs that exist, in order to tackle the rehabilitation of the socio-economic infrastructure of Rwanda. A detailed document which explains Rwanda's priority needs for reconstruction and assistance to its people is available to members.

The Rwandese Government, acting alone, cannot even on a very basic level provide for the urgent needs of its people in the areas of nutrition, clothing, medication, housing, drinking water and so forth. The Government, therefore, appeals to the international community and to all the countries represented here in the United Nations to provide significant and increased assistance.

The Government of Rwanda associates itself with the subregional initiative undertaken at the World Food Summit which recently concluded in Rome. On that occasion, Heads of State or Government of the subregion, under the helm of the President of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi, came together and expressed the unanimous wish that the international community should regard assistance to Rwanda as something that should be channelled not so much through the multinational force as through a rapid transfer of funds, goods and services of equivalent value to the region for the benefit of the repatriated Rwandese refugees.

I take this opportunity to thank friendly countries, international organizations and the United Nations itself for the assistance that they continue to provide to my country. The draft resolution before the Assembly would strengthen that assistance.

The Acting President: I call now on the representative of Ireland to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.41.

Mr. Holohan (Ireland): I have the honour, on behalf of the European Union, to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.41, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people". China and the Czech Republic wish to add their names to the list of sponsors.

The European Union considers international efforts to improve the economic and social situation of the Palestinian people to be an essential component of the peace process. We believe that, for an environment conducive to progress in the peace process to be maintained, particularly at this difficult time, it is essential that the Palestinian people see and experience for themselves the positive economic and social effects of the political changes that would be brought about by a comprehensive peace settlement between Israel and its neighbours.

The European Union, in the context of its contribution to the peace process, is committed to providing significant financial and other assistance to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian people, as well as to assist the Palestinian Authority in its administrative functions. The European Union and its member States together are the largest contributor of assistance to the Palestinian people. We have already pledged $625 million in assistance for the 1994-1999 period, with the goal of assisting in the consolidation of the Palestinian Authority and of improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people. Last year the total sum of the European Union and its Member States' contributions accounted for 45 per cent of the overall donor contributions to the West Bank and Gaza. At the Ministerial Conference on Economic Assistance to the Palestinian People, held in Paris in January, the European Union pledged a contribution of $120 million for 1996. The European Union was also pleased to cosponsor the Middle East/North Africa Economic Conference, held in Cairo last month.

The European Union welcomes and supports the work of the United Nations in assisting the development efforts of the Palestinian people, particularly in the fields of institutional infrastructure and effective public administration. We believe that the United Nations plays a vital role in ensuring the coordinated and effective use of international assistance to the Palestinian people.

The European Union is convinced that the peace process is the only way forward for all of the people of the Middle East. We believe that the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement requires a positive spirit from all parties and a willingness to participate fully in negotiations. In recent years, texts similar to the draft resolution before us have been adopted by consensus by this Assembly, a proof that such a spirit of cooperation does indeed exist. The European Union is therefore pleased to introduce this draft resolution and calls for its unanimous adoption by the General Assembly.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider, under agenda item 21 (b), draft resolutions A/51/L.27/Rev.1, A/51/L.37/Rev.1 and A/51/L.50/Rev.1 and draft decision A/51/L.43 and, under agenda item 21 (d), draft resolution A/51/L.41.

I shall now call on the representative of Israel for an explanation of vote before the voting.

I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Peleg (Israel): At the outset, I would like to share Israel's outrage at the brutal murder, two days ago, of an Israeli woman, Ita Tzur, and her 12-year-old son, Ephraim, and at the wounding of five members of their family outside of Ramallah by Palestinian terrorists belonging to the Popular Front. I call on the Palestinian Authority to unequivocally condemn these coldblooded murders and to do its utmost to apprehend the murderers and to extradite them to Israel.

For many years now, Israel has been cooperating fully with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as with other international organizations, in implementing programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In this respect, my delegation believes that the United Nations Special Coordinator in the West Bank and Gaza can play a significant role in achieving the social and economic goals set out by those organizations.

It is our view that the United Nations should increase its efforts and funding to assist the Palestinians in the territories, thus facilitating the successful implementation of the Declaration of Principles. Israel fully supports and encourages extending economic, financial and technical assistance to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We welcome the concerted efforts of Member States, international financial institutions and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations to aid in the development of the West Bank and Gaza. We have made a genuine efforts to reach a consensus on draft resolution A/51/L.41, which addresses the important issue of assistance to the Palestinian people. We believe that economic and social progress can be advanced only through cooperation. Economic development and improved living conditions in the territory will encourage peace and stability in the region.

However, Israel's participation in the consensus on this draft resolution should not be construed as implying any position regarding the present status of the territories referred to as "the occupied territories". Additionally, our support does not carry any implication regarding Israel's position on the permanent status of those territories, which, in accordance with the Declaration of Principles signed on 13 September 1993, is a matter to be negotiated between Israel and the PLO. With regard to paragraph 9, we hope that the proposed United Nations-sponsored seminar will be organized by an appropriate United Nations body acceptable to all parties.

Israel hopes that at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly there will be more consensus resolutions on issues relating to the Middle East, rather than one-sided political resolutions completely detached from reality. The Declaration of Principles and subsequent agreements signed by Israel and the PLO as well as the Treaty of Peace between Israel and Jordan, are momentous breakthroughs that open new vistas for economic and social progress, cooperation, prosperity and peace for our region.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions and one

draft decision submitted under sub-item (b) of agenda item 21.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/51/L.27/Rev.1, France and Qatar have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.27/Rev.1, entitled "Special emergency economic assistance to the Comoros". I have already listed the additional sponsors of this draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.27/Rev.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/30 F).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.37/Rev.1, entitled "Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.37/Rev.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/30 G).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.50/Rev.1, entitled "International assistance to Rwanda for the reintegration of returning refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.50/Rev.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/30 H).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/51/L.43, entitled "Special assistance to the front-line States and other neighbouring States.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/51/L.43?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.41, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.41?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/150).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will consider other draft resolutions submitted under sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 21 on Tuesday, 17 December.

Agenda item 42 *(continued)*

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/386)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.19/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Congo to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1.

Mr. Bakala (Congo) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the African Group, draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", which throughout the years has been a very useful means of promoting African development. For more than three decades African countries have had difficulties in the development sphere. To be sure, some countries have made progress in the area of growth and development, but for others, solutions to the vital problems in this area remain to be found.

The persistence of lacklustre development and economic growth in most African countries has given rise to increased poverty, high unemployment, high inflation, drops in production and environmental deterioration. These events underscore the urgent need

for Africa and the international community to make increased commitments and to enhance their cooperation in order to reverse the trend. It is in the light of this concern that the current draft resolution is being submitted for adoption by the General Assembly.

Draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1 has 17 preambular paragraphs, which provide an overall framework for the text. They describe the development situation in Africa and refer to the efforts made by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations in this area. The draft's 28 operative paragraphs draw the attention of the international community to priority problems in the current economic situation of the continent.

The draft resolution highlights in particular the urgent need for increased cooperation with countries experiencing political tension. The OAU would like to win increased support for its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, in particular in order to develop its preventive-diplomacy capacities. The text strongly urges the United Nations to support OAU in its efforts undertaken to manage peaceful democratic transition in Africa.

The Organization of African Unity continues to count on the support of the United Nations in order to cope with emergency situations caused by armed conflict, to put an end to hostilities, and to support rehabilitation efforts. It also counts on United Nations assistance in order to deal with the problems of refugees and displaced persons.

We hope that this draft resolution — the outcome of fruitful negotiations with our partners whom we would like to thank — will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Perfilier (Director, General Assembly Affairs Division): I should like to inform members that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1, under the terms of operative paragraph 24 of that draft resolution, the General Assembly would take note with appreciation of the recommendations of the meeting between the secretariats of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations held at Addis Ababa from 6 to 9 November 1995. The Assembly would also request the convening of a follow-up meeting in 1997, at Addis Ababa, to review and evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations agreed at the 1995 meeting, and to adopt new and effective joint action.

The meeting to be convened is expected to be held for five days in 1997. There will be two meetings per day, with interpretation services from and into English and French. In addition, the meeting would require 50 pages of pre-session and 75 pages of in-session documentation to be translated and issued in English and French; and 24 pages of post-session documentation, to be translated and issued in all the six official languages.

The inclusion of this meeting would be additional to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1997. The additions to the calendar of conferences have been reviewed in the light of other requirements, and it has been indicated by the Secretariat to the Fifth Committee in its document A/C.5/51/22/Add.1 that the meeting between the secretariats of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity can be accommodated within available conference-servicing resources.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/51/L.19/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 51/151).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

Programme of Work

The President in the Chair.

The President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly. This part of the fifty-first session of the Assembly is drawing to a close, and as members are aware, we still have quite a few agenda

items to consider. The programme of work for Monday, 16 December, appears in today's *Journal*. As for Tuesday, 17 December, a tentative programme of work for that day is now being distributed in the General Assembly Hall. I should like to point out that only those agenda items which I am in a position to schedule at this time appear on this tentative programme of work. Additions to it will be announced on Monday.

Mr. Baumanis (Latvia), Vice-President, in the Chair.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly. On Monday, 16 December in the morning, the General Assembly will hold the debate on agenda item 56, "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina" after considering the reports of the Sixth Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.